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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to discuss the utilization of Stake's theory of responsive evaluation by a unit in state government charged with the evaluation of the Illinois Migrant Program. Through interviews with state and local Title I staff, we were able to discover program purposes and concerns and to later conceptualize these concerns into issues and problems. Expanding on Stake's model, our approach includes a larger variety of audiences and the use of information from one project to resolve problems in another. The report is a dissemination vehicle as well as a federally mandated evaluation. (Author)

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# USE OF RESPONSIVE EVALUATION IN STATEWIDE PROGRAM EVALUATION

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In statewide program evaluations, the most common method used to acquire data is through what Stake calls "preordinate" evaluations. By preordinate evaluations, he means evaluations that emphasize "1) statement of goals, 2) use of objective tests, 3) standards held by program personnel, and 4) research-type reports." (Stake, 1974, p.7). Stake suggests that there can be another way to learn how effectively a program is being implemented. He calls this method "responsive" evaluation. "Responsive evaluation is less reliant on formal communication, more reliant on natural communication." (Stake, 1974, p.7) It orients more directly to program activities than to program intents, it responds to audience requirements for information, and it refers to the different value perspectives of the people at hand in reporting the success and failure of the program.

Although responsive evaluation makes little use of flow charts and test scores, it does not ignore objective measures if they are primary components of the instructional program. "They are treated not as the basis for the evaluation plan, but as components of the instructional plan. <u>These components are to be evaluated just as other components are.</u>" (Stake, 1974, p. 10, Underlining added.)

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Since objective data can be a component of responsive evaluation, why can't a statewide evaluation be conducted that includes what people do naturally when they evaluate things -- observe and react. Why can't a statewide evaluation orient more directly to program activities than to program intents, respond to audience requirements for information, and refer to the different value-perspectives of the people at hand in reporting the success and failure of the program?

These questions have become the concern of the Program Review and Documentation Unit (P.R.D.U.) of the Illinois Office of Education, an internal unit within the Department for Exceptional Children. This unit's responsibilities are to evaluate special education programs in Illinois that are state or federally funded. The five members of the unit spend most of their time evaluating the Elementary and Secondary Act Title I programs, which include programs for the educationally disadvantaged child, the migrant child, and those neglected/delinquent or handicapped children who are served by state operated or state supported facilities.

Until 1972, the federally mandated evaluations of the Title I programs were contracted to universities, thus preventing continuous year round follow-up of the Title I programs. In the fall of 1972, the P.R.D.U. was given responsibility for the annual evaluations; the unit was not commissioned, it was assigned. Over the past two-and-a-half years, this unit has evolved from one that has reported numerical statistical data to one that is more concerned with issues that may have an effect on the quality of program services.

The P.R.D.U. has at least three audiences to which it responds when evaluations are written. One audience is the federal government,

which is a mandated audience. To meet the needs of this audience, preordinate evaluation data is required. Another audience or client is the State Education Agency, especially the coordinators of the Title I programs. This paper, however, will be focusing on the migrant program. The migrant coordinator has been an active client, providing input to the P.R.D.U. regarding the needs and concerns of the migrant program that he feels should be examined. A third client is the migrant project directors. They are passive clients, providing little input in the form of comments or criticisms to the P.R.D.U.

Although the evaluation of the migrant program is compiled because it is the law, the unit has chosen to not only report numbers, but to point out areas of concern that could affect the state and local administrators of the migrant projects. By doing this, the P.R.D.U. hopes to educate its audience as to the potential of evaluation reports.

In order to most effectively discuss how the unit has attempted to employ Stake's method of responsive evaluation in evaluating the migrant program, Stake's list of 12 recurring events (see Figure 1), which he has diagrammed in the form of a clock face will be used. Stake emphasizes that any event can follow any event, and that observation and feedback must be continuous. This clock moves clockwise, counter-clockwise, and cross-clockwise. Many of the events can occur simultaneously and the evaluator may return to each event several times during the course of the evaluation.

Since the migrant program evaluator had written two annual reports, she already had an overview of the program activities.* She then approached the migrant coordinator in order to conceptualize issues or problems. The migrant coordinator made an assumption that successful migrant projects had changed and were continuing to change community

*Underlined statements come from Stake's clock

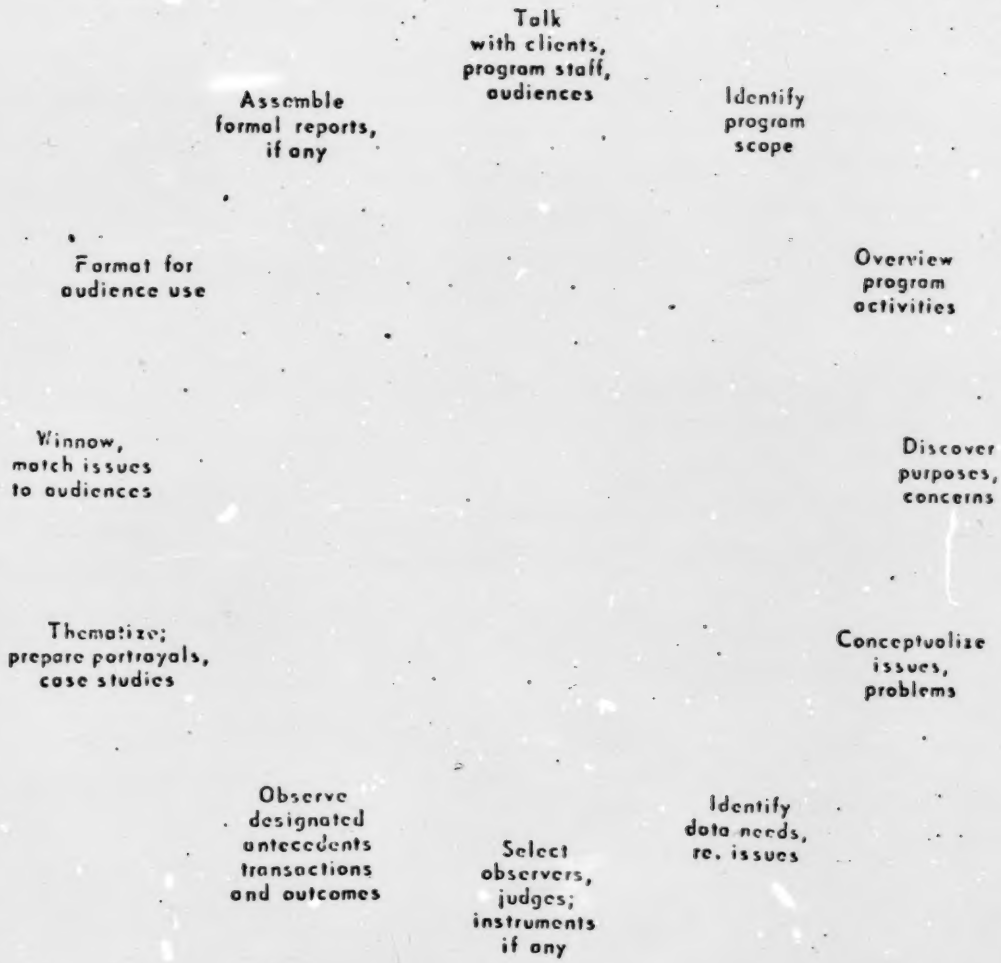
Talk with clients, program staff, audiences
Assemble formal reports, if any
Identify program scope
Format for audience use
Overview program activities
Winnow, match issues to audiences
Discover purposes, concerns
Thematize; prepare portrayals, case studies
Conceptualize issues, problems
Observe designated antecedents transactions and outcomes
Select observers, judges; instruments if any
Identify data needs, re. issues

Figure 2. Prominent events in a responsive evaluation.

attitudes towards the migrants. He felt this was especially true of the eight week summer migrant projects. He wanted the unit to observe and record the techniques used by the successful projects so that other sites could use this information to change their local community attitudes. Observers were selected and instruments were developed. Two members of the P.R.D.U. visited three summer migrant project sites for two days each and interviewed staff, parents, townspeople, and children, not only to learn about the project/child relationship, but to also determine the community/migrant relationship and the effect of the school program on this relationship.

Through talking with program staff, the P.R.D.U. learned that the assumption that successful projects had changed community attitudes towards the migrants was invalid. Any effect of the school programs on the community/migrant relationship was not discernable to the observers. The migrant project tended to operate in isolation from the local community. Those teachers and staff that were interested in working with migrant children formed a temporary community that shared a genuine concern for the future of the migrant children.

The members of the P.R.D.U. were required to be flexible and change the focus of the visitations. Overviewing program activities at the local level, identifying program scope, discovering purposes and concerns, and conceptualizing issues and problems through talks with the staff at the migrant sites became the goal of the visits.

Descriptions of the three sites were written up and included in the formal report, the fiscal year 1974 evaluation. These portrayals described each project as seen by the staff, parents, townspeople, and children interviewed. Below is one portrayal.

Site: Princeville Elementary School
Princeville, Illinois

Congressional District: #18

| Individuals Interviewed: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Project Director | 1 | Aides | 2 |
| | Recruiter | 1 | Older Children | 6 |
| | Teachers | 6 | Parents | 4 |
| | | | Townspeople | 4 |

Princeville is a rural community with a population of 1,455 located in central Illinois. The Joan of Arc canning company has a plant there, and hires migrants from Texas to pick crops such as asparagus, peas, corn and pumpkins between May and October of each year. Housing in camps is pro ded for the migrants, rent free, during their stay in Princeville. The migrant summer school project has been operating for eight years.

The summer school program was much more informal than a typical regular term program. The children were free to move about the classrooms; swimming was part of the curriculum; field trips were taken once a week. To encourage older students to attend school, parents were informed that the children could arrive at school at any time; tardiness held no consequences in summer school. The children were welcome to come to school after they had worked in the fields. Career awareness classes, where students were exposed to a variety of jobs that were realistically possible for them, were provided as incentives for the older children.

Two summer school programs operated concurrently at the Princeville Elementary school this past summer. One program was a remedial program funded through ESEA Title I 89-10 funds that served the children who lived year round in Princeville. The other program was the ESEA Title I 89-750 migrant program. Last year, the 89-10 summer school classes were combined with the migrant classes. This year, the school board voted

against the integrated summer school program, because they felt the town children should be receiving strictly remedial work rather than academics combined with field trips and swimming. The Princeville migrant school staff hope to reinstate an integrated summer program next year.

Project Director

Ms. N, the project director, had been teaching in the migrant summer school program for the past five years; Ms. N was brought up in the area around Princeville, although she taught elsewhere during the academic year. This was her first year as project director.

Ms. N and the director of all Title I programs in the district wrote the proposal for the project. Staff were selected based on their interest in teaching migrant children and their qualifications. Since eight Princeville teachers were already teaching in the 89-10 summer school program, only two summer teachers were from Princeville.

Ms. N saw the strength of the project in "staff flexibility and their great attitude toward migrant kids." She saw, for herself and her teachers, a need for long range planning. Ms. N felt that she could improve as an administrator by determining specific goals whereby her staff could best serve the migrant children in an eight week program. She would like to see the teachers develop reasonable classroom goals that could be accomplished in the time allotted, rather than skim over material in order to meet an unreasonable expectation. Ms. N would like to organize a work study program for next summer, but she did not know the best methods for implementing such a program or how to approach potential employers.

Ms. N evaluated her staff through classroom observation. She was always in the building and was easily accessible to all teaching and

non-teaching staff. She felt she needed assistance in developing different and more sophisticated evaluation tools, but Ms. N did not know who to turn to for assistance.

Recruiter

The recruiter for the Princeville program, Mr. G, was a sociology student from San Antonio, Texas. His experiences during the summer were to be incorporated in a paper for which he would get field work credit. He had been living in the camp for the past two months with the knowledge of the camp foreman. By living in the camp, Mr. G was able to get closer to the migrant parents and earn their trust.

Mr. G had varied responsibilities. He had visited every dwelling in the three camps in the area and had obtained the names, ages, and schools last attended for all children under 16. He took care of attendance records and sent updated migrant student record transfer system forms to Springfield. Mr. G took children to clinics and translated prescriptions for the parents. He also tutored children who had little or no knowledge of English.

Mr. G felt a need for greater interaction between the migrants and the community. He suggested the organizing of a welcoming committee.

Teachers

This was Ms. H's third summer at the project. She is not bilingual and she teaches in the northern part of the state during the school year. She is "in love with the migrant kids." She is very impressed with the closeknit family life of the migrant and described them as the hardest working people she has met.

In class, she wanted to improve the migrant child's abilities in reading, language and math. She wanted "to make them fit into the world

. . . to build their self-concept." Ms. H has had good experiences with the migrant parents she has worked with. She has found them to be very interested and supportive, commenting that she would rather work with these parents than her regular term Anglo parents.

Ms. D was teaching for the very first time. She found that her picture of the migrant child was idealistic. The children were less excited about learning than she expected. Her goals for the children were: 1) to improve skills they had already been taught, 2) to instill the idea that learning can be fun and challenging, but a challenge that they can meet, 3) to be aware of other job opportunities, and 4) to be happy with themselves and considerate of others. Her long term goal was to eliminate the children from the migrant stream.

Ms. B, a bilingual candidate for a Ph.D. in Spanish, was teaching at Princeville for the first time. She taught high school students in Peoria during the regular term. Although she was interviewed in February, she was hired just before the summer session since another teacher turned down the job. Consequently, she did not have an opportunity to plan her eight week curriculum. She used several methods for identifying individual strengths and weaknesses in the areas of math, reading, and writing of both Spanish and English. She usually divided the children into three ability groups. She and the aide would each work with a group while the third group worked independently. When there were no field trips, class would start with P.E., followed by one-and-a-half hour of English/Language Arts and then one-and-a-half hours of math and some science, utilizing math games as much as possible. After lunch she worked on writing and spelling in Spanish, art and music. She used no planned curriculum; she "winged it" on a day to day basis. As a consequence, she had no idea how to evaluate the program.

Ms. B. Felt the state office could help migrant teachers by supplying "teaching English as a second language materials."

Mr. W, the Texas teacher, had spent several summers in Princeville. He has a strong desire to help migrant children get out of the migrant stream through education, although he had commented during a later conversation that "there will always be more migrants because as the present ones gain education or other skills and drop out, new migrants from Mexico will come."

He noticed that many of the children view the summer school as a vacation school. He felt the majority of the parents liked the summer school because: 1) it kept the children out of the camps, 2) it served as a day care center, 3) it was a good educational experience, and 4) it was a vacation school. He had heard directly that some parents were concerned that the children were not getting enough academics.

Mr. W felt a need for more academic tools. He suggested that a handbook be developed locally for each grade. This handbook would include general lesson plans to help the teachers. He would like to see greater use of behavioral objectives and the development of assessment techniques to better diagnose the childrens' weaknesses and teach those skill areas.

Ms. D teaches in a neighboring community during the regular school year, and has been teaching in the Princeville summer program for the past three years. Ms. D's classroom goals were: 1) to improve the migrant child's self-concept, 2) to make the child bilingual since these children are usually poor in Spanish and English, and 3) to keep them in school. She saw the ultimate goal of the program to make the migrants see the value of education. She noted that the children are starting school earlier and staying in longer. Ms. D commented that the migrants do not perceive

their situation to be as bad as Anglos do. They see their life as hard work and hard play.

Ms. D, like the other teachers here, visited the parents in the camps approximately once a week. She noted that, in the past, parents did not send their children to summer school. Parents were now more supportive, but if money was tight work would come first.

Ms. D. felt the community was afraid of the migrants because they didn't understand them. She noted that in spring of 1973, the former project director held a meeting for the Anglo parents whose children would be in the integrated program and explained some of the cultural differences between the Anglos and the migrants. Most of the parents who attended the meeting sent their children to summer school. Ms. D found that a more positive attitude change occurred in both groups of children as a result of the integrated program. Ms. D was sorry the integrated program was discontinued.

This was also Ms. S's third summer teaching at Princeville. She loved working with migrant children and felt there was a positive attitude among the summer school teachers. Ms. S's goals were: 1) to make the children like school, 2) to make them like themselves, and 3) to provide some academics but to emphasixe self-concept. Her long term goal was to see them leave the migrant stream.

Ms. S thought the attitude of the migrant and the Anglo children had improved during the integrated class sessions last summer.

Aides

Ms. T, a migrant aide, has been coming to Princeville for the past eight years and has been an aide for six. She was certified with the summer program in Illinois as well as the program in Texas. She was excited that her daughter was learning good Spanish in the Texas school

and was visiting new places and getting remedial help in the Princeville program. She also commented that the summer school program kept the children busy while the parents were working. Ms. T liked the idea of teachers visiting the homes. Although she liked the Texas and summer school teachers, she felt the regular term Princeville teachers were too strict with the Anglo and the migrant children.

Ms. L, another migrant aide, has been coming to Princeville for ten years and has been an aide for six. Her responsibilities appeared to be general: aiding the children with math and reading, helping them write their names and numbers, watching the class when the teacher left the room. She felt the program was good and that the children learned a lot. She commented that her daughter was learning more in Illinois than in Texas, although she felt that the summer term Princeville teachers responded more warmly to the migrant children than did the regular term teachers. Ms. L felt home visits were helpful in some cases, and she had no suggestions for improving the school program.

Older Children

Manuel was 13 years old and had been coming to Princeville for two years. He liked the school and his teachers. His favorite subjects were art, math and gym and he especially liked the field trips. He was satisfied with the segregated classrooms, since this arrangement allowed him to play with all his friends from the camp, although he stated that he also played with children from the town.

Donna, 14, had been coming to Princeville for "a long time." She liked school, especially the field trips and the vacation classes (sewing, cooking and shop). Donna preferred the segregated grouping since there were so many fights last year. She commented, "My parents send me to school because there is nothing important I can do in the camp."

Two other older students who were interviewed had been coming to Princeville for three years. They especially enjoyed the field trips and swimming. One child liked the integrated program last year, while the other child preferred being with the migrant children.

Five town children from the summer Title I program were interviewed. All had participated in the integrated program the previous year. Of the first two children interviewed, one was an Anglo and one was a settled out migrant. The Anglo child preferred summer school this year because the day was shorter and he felt he was learning more. He did miss the field trips. The settled out child preferred the mixed class to segregated classes, while the Anglo child didn't care. Neither had heard any preferences by their parents.

Parents

Three families were interviewed at the camps. All three families welcomed the interviewers courteously, including a ready invitation to come inside their clean and orderly, but cramped for space, cabins.

In the first cabin Mr. and Mrs. S welcomed us into their one room which they shared with their child. Mrs. S had been coming to Princeville every summer since she was born 21 years ago. She was enrolled in the school system as a child and could compare her experiences with those of her child. The addition of a summer project, via Title I 89-750, had made quite a difference. She especially liked the fact that the teachers came out to the camps to talk with parents about their child's progress. Mr. and Mrs. S were so concerned about their child's education that they were going to stay in Illinois this year so their child could begin kindergarten (in Illinois a child can start school if he is five by

December 1). They would put their child in a private school if they went back to Texas although the cost would be high.

Their child liked school very much. Mrs. S did not care for how the migrant children were grouped and segregated when they came in April. The school district claimed it did this to avoid large classrooms.*

Another parent felt the program at the school was excellent. She liked the field trips and was glad the summer program was not too academically oriented.

A third parent, Mr. Y, was in Princeville for the first time. He was a construction worker in Texas. His older sons were working in the factory because Mr. Y felt the school was not providing enough academics. However, the boys were to attend school in the fall. The younger son, perhaps reflecting the impressions in the home, did not like summer school because he was not learning enough. Mr. Y had suggested that the boy thinks of the school as a "vacation school". The father probably utilized the school as a free day care service.

Townspeople

Since Princeville was a very rural community, it was possible to interview townspeople regarding their impressions of the migrant summer school program.

The bank executive's perception of the migrant summer program was that it was a day camp. He was opposed to the number of field trips and felt that summer school was a time for remedial work. He was in favor of the concept of a summer school program for migrants, but he felt the emphasis was in the wrong place.

* The migrant coordinator has noted that migrant children were pulled out of regular classrooms for an 89-750 funded tutorial program only.

child. He was concerned about the needs of his own children. He mentioned that his daughter needed help in math last year, but that she could not get that help unless a tutor was hired.

The druggist had heard of the program at the summer school. Mr. P had no strong feelings about the school, but he stated that some townspeople were jealous because they felt the migrant children were getting extra privileges at the summer school. The druggist's son-in-law, a member of the town council, thought the money was well spent.

Mr. S had an extensive historical perspective of the migrant influence on the community over the past 27 years. He was currently an administrator at the Joan of Arc plant in Princeville, but he had worked as a recruiter for migrant help in Texas as a foreman.

Until his heart attack last winter, he had been serving on local school boards for 20 years. In this time, he had noticed a big difference in the education of migrants. The school " . . . attaches them to our society." Mr. S felt the children needed the continued structure that summer school gave them, and he noted that the "school keeps children busy if they can't work." He felt the school could benefit the migrants by enabling them to get out of the stream.

When asked about the integrated summer school program that was held last summer, Mr. S noted that it had some good social and fiscal (economically more efficient) benefits. However, due to the vociferous demands of several parents, the board voted to have separate but equal programs. Mr. S was on the borderline but he left early and did not vote. He said,

> It is probably better this way, because the town wasn't ready yet for an integrated program, maybe in another five years. For example, when you brought these two groups together last year the slow Anglos were mixed in with migrant students who ranged from slow to very bright. Because of this uneven mix, the migrant kid will always win.

School was viewed as competition between groups to Mr. S. He had difficulty accepting the idea that an Anglo could perform less effectively than a migrant. This feeling was shared by others, since hard feelings developed when a migrant won the sewing contest last year.

Regarding summer school, Mr. S. felt, "The field trip route may bring more kids into the school, but time would more wisely be spent on basics. This will develop better leaders who can help their people."

As a result of the visits to the migrant projects, the P.R.D.U. was able to conceptualize issues and problems regarding program effectiveness that were not reflected in the portrayals. Instead, the coordinator of the migrant program was interviewed and these concerns were discussed in the interview. At this point, the P.R.D.U. progressed from recording happenings and values as perceived by project staff to assuming an interventionist role. Based on the site visits, the P.R.D.U. had concerns about the effectiveness of the eight week summer projects. Most teachers interviewed had never seen the project proposal and had failed to develop long and short range goals for the eight weeks. They were unable to specify what changes they expected to see in the children as a result of attending summer school or how they were going to measure those changes. This concern of limited or vague objectives was shared by one of the Princeville teachers who was an ex-migrant. He specifically was concerned with the lack of lesson plans, curriculum goals, and evaluation tools.

As a result of the interview with the migrant coordinator regarding these findings, the coordinator and his staff decided to devote more time to training administrators in conducting needs assessments and writing adequate performance objectives. Two training sessions have already been held, with a member of the P.R.D.U. attending as a participant observer. At these sessions, the local migrant directors have been requested to have each teacher of migrant children read the proposal before he/she signs a contract. The teacher then not only knows what is expected of him/her during the eight week summer session, but he/she will also be expected to develop check-lists for gathering base line data and assessing pupil progress.

The fiscal year 1975 migrant evaluation will include visits to six migrant summer projects. The P.R.D.U. will ascertain the effectiveness of the administrator training on project implementation by observing designated antecedents, transactions and outcomes. Instruments will be developed to interview teachers as to their classroom objectives and the unit will also be examining the checklists developed by the teachers.

Secondary areas of focus have also developed since the fall of 1974. The assistant to the migrant coordinator has been developing a supplementary phonics program that can be incorporated into any reading program. Several sites will be field testing this program and data will be kept on control and experimental groups. The results of this program will be incorporated in the annual migrant evaluation report, thus providing feedback to the sites as to the utility of this phonics program.

Another focus will be the effectiveness of a special preschool intervention program on a migrant population that will be attending the program only eight weeks. Again, a sample of migrant projects will participate in the preschool program, and the results will be included in the annual report.

The P.R.D.U. represents the state, and it must be careful not to alienate the migrant project directors because they conduct the summer programs voluntarily. While the unit cannot be too interventionist at the local level, it can be at the state level. The migrant coordinator has taken past recommendations by the P.R.D.U. and displayed leadership by responding to those recommendations with program change.

Stake's method of responsive evaluation can be applied at the state level. State administrators can take the information gleaned from interviewing local staff in their natural environment and make broad changes that improve the quality of the programs statewide.

REFERENCE

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